

Brighter Days

Issue 4: Engaging in Pleasant Activities

Feeling mentally fit starts with simply being in a better mood. And we know there are ways to help brighten our outlook. In the first three newsletters, you received information to help you better understand the signs and symptoms of depression, available treatment options and tips for communicating with your provider. In these next three newsletters, we'll provide you with concrete tools and skills to help improve your mood. The three areas we'll cover are engaging in pleasant activities, reducing harmful thoughts and increasing contact with others.*

Engaging in Pleasant Activities Can Increase Mood and Improve Resilience

Activities are linked to mood. When you feel down, it may be hard to find the energy to do healthy activities. But when you do activities, you are more likely to:

- Feel happier
- Have positive thoughts about yourself
- Have healthy contact with other people
- Keep feeling good.

In general, more positive activities lead to more helpful thoughts and feelings. You have some choice in the kinds of thoughts and activities in which you engage.

When you do one activity, you often start a chain: one pleasant activity can lead to another positive activity, less negative thoughts, more positive feelings and more contacts with other people.

Different Kinds of Pleasant Activities

Self-care activities are things that you do to take care of yourself and your life. For example: get enough sleep, plan your meals, or exercise every day, even if it's for only a few minutes.

Fun activities are simple, healthy things that bring you pleasure. For example: watch a movie with a friend, go for a walk or listen to music.



Resources WellFirst Health

For assistance in finding a behavioral health therapist or psychiatrist, call the Customer Care Center number on the back of your insurance card or use the "Find a Provider" feature on [wellfirstbenefits.com](https://www.wellfirstbenefits.com).

WellFirst Health also provides free phone education and resource coordination for members with complex, unstable behavioral health needs. To learn more, visit [wellfirstbenefits.com](https://www.wellfirstbenefits.com) or call our Customer Care Center.

*This information was developed by and re-printed with permission from Northwestern University Center for Community Health's Mothers and Babies program.



We are here to help

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Learning activities gives you a sense of accomplishment or of having learned to do something well. For example: take an online class or start an exercise program.

Meaningful activities fit with your values. They boost your healthy self-image and bring purpose to your life. For example: hold a steady job or participate in church, social, political or community activities.

Activity: What do You Like to Do?

Think of activities you can do alone or with others and jot them down.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Overcoming Obstacles to Doing Pleasant Activities

Sometimes even after we decide to do something we enjoy, our plans still fall through no matter our intentions. Think of possible obstacles and solutions to overcome them (sometimes the biggest obstacles are our own thoughts). Pick the solution that works best and see how it works. If it doesn't, try something else.

What is keeping me from doing activities I enjoy?	How can I overcome these obstacles?

Personal Project: Make a Commitment

In the coming week, make a commitment to do one of the pleasant activities on your list. Afterwards, talk with a supportive person about how it went. Were there any obstacles to completing the activity? Did completing the activity change your mood in any way?

Other Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):
nami.org

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance:
dbsalliance.org

Anxiety and Depression Association of America:
adaa.org

▶ Next Month

We'll explore how our thoughts influence our mood and learn ways to change harmful thought patterns.